

Christmas Cheer

FORGET your devils and keep your pink lamps lighted," says Frances Hodgson Burnett. "A pink lamp always makes everything look lovely." The counsel is never more imperative than during the holiday season when we not only want to be happy ourselves, but to make others happy. Christmas cheer should be a contagion unchecked and unfettered. The universal brotherhood taught by the One whose nativity is commemorated in the holiday season makes the element of cheer second to that of love.

All Christmas associations are warmed by it. The great fireplace, through which the patron saint gains entrance, is ever the embodiment of cheer. The face of the old gentleman ever reflects cheerfulness, if we may trust the portraits. And the little folks who have an interest in the stockings hung by the chimney but echo the sentiment. Cheer is in the Christmas air, as in the robin's spring note.

But yet there are always some corners where gloom rests; some shadows amid the sunlight. There are some clouds which none of us can remove, but these are the fleecy clouds which just obscure the light of love from some lives. A little gust of wind, a touch of the human breath and they are dispelled, or at least shifted, and the sun shines over the shadowed spot.

Says Robert Louis Stevenson: "A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five pound note. He or she is radiating a focus of good will, and his or her entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted." The Christmas tree should have many candles. Every little heart should be made to beat more radiantly, and it takes very little of this world's goods or of human kindness to render even the child of the street radiantly happy. A bit of cheer leaveneth the lump of human misery. The wreaths of holly become a mockery unless we strive to add to the brightness of some neglected life.

REAL CHRISTMAS BABY.

Found in the Shadow of New York's Big Municipal Tree.

The varicolored lights from the big city Christmas tree were splashing the paths in Madison Square Garden, New York; on all sides trolley cars were clanging by, and under the tree more than 200 persons were chattering when, above the din, Policeman Matthew Adams heard the cry of an infant.

On a bench in the shadow of the big tree Adams found a small bundle covered with coarse paper and tied with hemp cord. In one end was a hole, from which came the wailing of a child.

Adams cut the cord and, unwrapping the paper covering, found a gray blanket. Inside was the nude and dimpled form of a baby boy, fast to his eyes and sending out repeated S O S's in lusty yells.

The big policeman at first was so surprised that he stood and grined a welcome to the little stranger. The youngster stopped crying long enough to take one squint at the policeman and then renewed his throaty protest.

Running to Twenty-fifth street, Adams hailed a taxicab and, jumping in with his burden, ordered the chauffeur to speed to Bellevue hospital.

Dr. Carr sent the boy, who, he said, was two or three days old, to the children's ward, where the nurses soon had him busy at a bottle.

Christmas in Wall Street

IN banks, corporation headquarters, trust companies, bond houses, brokerage shops, anywhere in Wall street, you cannot for the life of you get employees to admit that they expect Christmas bonuses as a regular feature of their annual salaries. Nor can you get employers to admit that the Christmas bonus is so established a thing that to omit obedience to its tradition would be heresy. They tell you vaguely that "it all depends." Questions about "what is going to be done for the boys" are resented out of all proportion to their impertinence, although there is much public interest in the matter.

This is what one bank did to free itself of what somebody in power thought an outright seasonal nuisance. About twenty years ago a large national bank quit its invariable habit of giving to every man, woman, boy and girl about the place, from president down to last scrubwoman, a Christmas present of \$250 in cash.

The men at the head of the bank decided their belief that the system was pernicious.

Imagine a messenger boy with \$250 to blow! It bred horrors after the holidays, and it was a sentimental business. So that season the management increased everybody's pay by \$250 a year, thus including the extinct bonus in all salaries.

The result was excellent. Now they make no fuss whatever about Christmas at that bank. It may happen that if raises are to be granted around the end of the year they may fall on or near Christmas day and be celebrated by sentimental recipients as tokens of the good will of the season. But there is nothing official about Christmas at the bank.

WILL SANTA COME TO DOLLY TOO, MAMMA?



Alaska has Two Christmas Days

ALASKA is the only place over which the American flag floats where two Christmas days are celebrated. This applies especially to the Alaskan peninsula and adjoining islands, where many of the natives belong to the Russian church with her Julian calendar. It is only since the coming of the American public school and mission that the "American Christmas" has been introduced in those parts. According to the Julian calendar, Christmas, Dec. 25, falls on the day that is Jan. 7 in the calendar elsewhere.

According to the Russian church in Alaska, Christmas begins at 2 o'clock in the morning, when the church bells announce the birth of Christ, and when the natives come out of their huts they find a bright and beautiful star of Bethlehem over the church beckoning them. The church is a small wooden building decorated with pictures of saints, lighted by candles, without seats or heat. The two sexes are ranged on the opposite sides of the room, either standing or kneeling. On this particular morning service is held from 2 until 6 and is made up of singing and reading. Although to white people it would seem a very great hardship to stand on the feet for four hours on a cold winter morning, yet the natives would consider it the worst kind of punishment should they be forced to stay away.

After the service the feasting and rejoicing begins. In the evening there takes place a very picturesque representation of the wise men following the star of Bethlehem to where the Christ Child is. As soon as it is night the young people separate into groups. One of the group goes before, carrying a large, beautifully trimmed star, in which a candle burns. On entering a house the party sings hymns and carols, as it was done centuries ago. These songs are either in the old Russian or in the Aleutian language. Many of the voices have the softness and sweetness so peculiar to Indian races, and this, combined with the charming old church music, produces a very agreeable effect. When they have sung and have been entertained the wise men proceed to the next house. This singing is kept up three nights.

During the remaining nights of the Christmas week another Biblical scene is presented—Herod's men searching for Jesus to kill him. Some one knocks at the door, and when it is opened a small masked party enters very softly and mutely and occupies itself in searching, and after some little time it passes out as silently as it came.

The new year is welcomed in with a grand masquerade ball, generally given by the chief of the village. The dance hall is a small room lighted by dripping candles, is just about high enough for one to stand up straight, and the floor is far from smooth. A squaw, Aleutian boy and half breed furnish the music on an accordion, harmonicon and guitar. Such airs as "The Squaw Harbor Quadrille" can be played well only by such an orchestra.

A Tiny Christmas Tree

ATINY fir tree of symmetrical shape and only two and half feet high was chosen for my little girl's doll's Christmas tree, says a writer in the Woman's Home Companion. This was easily planted in a flowerpot and established upon a large table in the living room. Tiny candles were fastened upon the branches, a ten cent bunch of tinsel was sufficient for draping and a further outlay for the small colored glass ornaments added to the gorgeousness.

The main idea is to keep everything on a miniature scale while duplicating for the beloved doll children the gifts that usually fall to the small mother. So it was that tiny dolls were dressed; tiny fancy boxes were filled with tiny candles, others contained wee handkerchiefs embroidered with smallest of initials; here hung a hand mirror, there a nursing bottle, tiny fans, a lovely set of cups for the tea table, a small bird in a gilt cage, a new pet kitty, and so on. Ten cent stores yielded most of the treasures.

On the morning of Christmas my eight-year-old was shown her old dollies, each radiantly dressed, and was told that their tree was ready below stairs. The joy and delight at the sight were charming to behold, and the blissful apportionment of gifts began. As each arriving playmate rolled in her new dolly "to show what I've got," envy and pride reflected upon the faces of the visitor and visited, only to be dispelled by "there is something on the tree for your dolly."

Under the Holly Bough

We who have loved each other

In this fast fading year,
Sister or friend or brother,
Come, gather happy here
And let your hearts grow fonder
No memory glad shall ponder
Old loves and later wooing
Beneath the holly bough,
So sweet in their renewing
Beneath the holly bough.

We who have nourished sadness
In this fast fading year,
Gestranged from joy and gladness,
Come, gather hopeful here.
No more let useless sorrow
Pursue your night and morrow.
Come, join in our embraces
Beneath the holly bough.
Take heart, uncloud your faces
Beneath the holly bough.
—Charles Machay.

Christmas Superstition.

The United States is almost poverty stricken in so far as its collection of superstitions is concerned, our early settlers having failed to import many from Europe and not adopting those of the Indians. Of course some of us don't like to see the new moon over the left shoulder or start a journey on Friday and the like, but few of us take even these very seriously. We must go to "the old countries" to get superstitions with any genuine thrill in them. There are a number which have to do with Christmas.

In north Germany, where the practical yet poetic spinning wheel still hums in the cottages, one must not spin during the twelve nights of Christmas lest he or she walk after death. (To the American reader it may occur that this would probably be more disturbing to others than to oneself.) If the spinning is done after sunset on Saturday night will eat the work.

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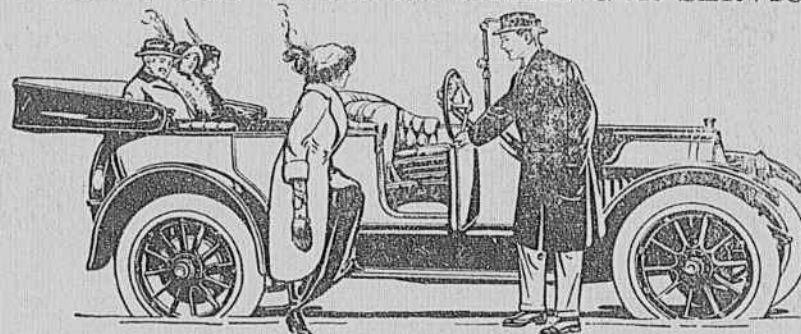
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